第 42 卷第 3 期
2012 年 5 月

浙 江 大 学 学 报(人文社会科学版)
Journal of Zhejiang University(Humanities and Social Sciences)

Vol. 42, No. 3
May 2012

主题栏目：现代主义与东方文化研究

DOI：10.3785/j.issn.1008-942X.2012.03.281

选择性亲和力？

——王尔德读庄子

张隆溪
（香港城市大学 比较文学与翻译系，香港）

□ 向玲玲　译

［摘　要］英国汉学家翟理思 1889 年发表了他翻译的《庄子》，而英国作家奥斯卡·王尔德很快在 1890 年就发表了长篇书评，把庄子的道家思想阐释为反对一切政府管理、争取个人自由的哲学。这正是王尔德自己所理解的费边社会主义，即认为艺术应该是超越政治和伦理的唯美主义思想；这是一种近于无政府主义的思想，主张一切任其自然。王尔德这一思想与主张无为而治的道家思想有一种不期而至的契合。虽然王尔德不懂中文，对道家思想也没有研究，但凭着艺术家和思想家的敏感，他对庄子的评论不无深刻之处。由于现代王尔德研究往往不关注这篇书评，而王尔德选本也通常不收录这篇书评，因此，在审视西方现代文学与中国传统的关系时探讨王尔德对《庄子》译本的评论，自有其意义。

［关键词］王尔德；庄子；个人自由；无政府主义；现代主义；道家思想

Elective Affinities？

— On Wilde's Reading of Zhuangzi

Zhang Longxi

(*Department of Chinese, Translation and Linguistics, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China*)

Abstract: Oscar Wilde wrote a long review in 1890 on Herbert Giles' English translation of the *Zhuangzi*, which was published in 1889. Wilde read Zhuangzi's Taoist thinking as a philosophy for individual freedom against all forms of government. That was of course Wilde's own philosophy, the sort of Fabian socialism as he understood it. In Wilde's philosophy, the aestheticism of art is beyond morality and politics and is a near anarchistic liberalism. His aesthetic thoughts on art surprisingly bore some resemblance or affinities with the Taoist ideal of ruling with non-action. Though Wilde was ignorant of Chinese and no expert of Taoism, his artistic and intellectual sensibilities made it possible for him to make some insightful remarks on Zhuangzi's ideas. As this review is not usually taken notice of in modern

［收稿日期］2012-03-28　　［本刊网址·在线杂志］http://www.journals.zju.edu.cn/soc

［在线优先出版日期］2012-04-29

［作者简介］张隆溪，男，香港城市大学比较文学与翻译系讲座教授兼跨文化研究中心主任，主要从事英国文学、中国古典文学、中西比较文学、文学理论及跨文化研究。

［译者简介］向玲玲，女，浙江旅游职业学院讲师，主要从事英美文学研究。

Wildean criticism, nor is it included in most Wilde selections, it is thus important to pay some critical attention to Wilde's views on the translation of the *Zhuangzi*.
Key words: Oscar Wilde; Zhuangzi; individual freedom; anarchism; modernism; Taoism

一

在奥斯卡·王尔德的著名小说《道林·格雷的肖像》的开头，亨利·沃顿爵士躺在长沙发波斯软垫上吸烟，这时一些飞鸟的剪影就像一幅活生生的中国皮影戏在他眼前展开："飞鸟的幻影不时掠过绵延在窗前的大幅柞蚕丝落地窗帘，营造出瞬间的日本式效果，令他想起那些脸色苍白如玉的东京画家每每运用静态的艺术手段来传递轻灵的动感"[1]1。王尔德在此描绘了维多利亚时代英国人想象中充满异国情调的、迷人的东方色彩，不过与此同时，他完全知道这种效果更多是来自于异国的幻想，而不是东方国家的现实。"这些日本人都是个别艺术家们刻意而自觉的创造"，王尔德在他的论文《谎言的衰朽》中就曾用一种冷静的、不动声色的语调这样说。"生活在日本的真实的日本人与普通的英国人并没有什么不同；也就是说，他们非常普通，没有任何值得注意或特殊之处。事实上，整个日本就是一个纯粹的杜撰。"[2]46-47 当然，对王尔德来说，艺术与想象远比平凡的生活重要得多，正是艺术创造赋予生活以美和意义。他无疑宁愿选择艺术虚构出来的日本，而不是平凡现实中的日本，尽管他知道想象与现实之间的差异。

王尔德在文集《意图》的许多批评论文中明确表达了这些重要观点。正如笔者曾提出的那样，"《意图》中关于艺术与批评的对话有一个连贯的、对称的结构"[3]160。首先，《谎言的衰朽》提出了"为艺术而艺术"这一大胆的新美学理论信条："生活模仿艺术远多于艺术模仿生活"；"生活为艺术举起一面镜子，不是再现画家或雕塑家想象出来的某个奇特类型，就是把虚构中的梦想变为现实"[2]32,39。然后，《作为艺术家的批评家》一文在批评和艺术之间建立起结构上与艺术和生活之间相类似的关系，主张如果我们通过艺术理解生活，也就可以通过批评理解艺术，因为"批评家与他所批评的艺术作品之间的关系，就犹如艺术家与形和色之可见世界，或与激情和思想之不可见世界那样的关系"[4]136-137。王尔德宣称，"最高的批评，作为最纯粹形式的个人印象，在其自身的意义上比创造更有创造性"；它是"唯一文明形式的自传"[4]138-139。在他的创造性批评概念中，王尔德充分承认批评者的主观性，即从批评者自身的视角和想象性幻象出发，仁者见仁智者见智地洞见生活和艺术的本质。上述观点，或者说这个观点的扭曲形式，可能已在近年来的文学理论和批评中走向了极端，现在的批评家或理论家往往对诸多社会或政治问题比对文学更感兴趣，但对王尔德来说，艺术创造始终是批评者的关注焦点。一些戴着文学或文化批评面具的当代批评论著故弄玄虚，晦涩难读，充满了诘屈聱牙的术语，与这种当代学院风格的文字比较起来，王尔德那机智幽默、赏心悦目的文论，读起来是一种莫大的享受。

二

正是在这样的背景下，笔者现在来谈谈王尔德对 1889 年英国汉学家翟理思译介的中国哲学家庄子的评论。虽然《庄子》并不是文学作品——但话又说回来，庄子的语言可能比大多数诗人或作家更富文学性和诗意，他借以表达观点的悖论和暗喻也比大多数文学作品更微妙、更出色。王尔德发表于《言者》1890 年 2 月 8 日的长篇评论无疑浸透着他在《作为艺术家的批评家》中所倡导的创造性精神。如果说他在《道林·格雷的肖像》中提到的"瞬间的日本式效果"可以看做一种装饰性色

调,以便在小说开头渲染一点东方风味的话,那么王尔德题为《一位中国圣哲》的评论则是对庄子这位被瞿理思描绘为“神秘主义者、道德家与社会改革家”的哲学家的严肃讨论。王尔德的评论不仅给我们提供了宝贵机会瞥见他对一位古老的东方哲学家的兴趣,同时也提供了王尔德批评的一个范例,看他如何从维多利亚时期批评者的角度来阅读庄子,并将这位中国哲学家的思想用于评价自己那个时代的英国社会。王尔德的评论还显示了19世纪90年代至20世纪初的世纪之交,欧洲对道家哲学与神秘主义的兴趣有多大。由于这篇评论没有被大部分现代版的王尔德作品集收录,不很常见,所以尚未得到评论界应有的关注,甚至被王尔德研究专家们所忽略,而唯其如此,我们才更有理由将其作为王尔德作品的一个重要方面来研究。

在瞿理思的译著序言中,他将庄子形容为儒家的敌人、老子神秘学说的继承者和一个伟大的辩论者,他“有如此杰出的文学和辩证才能,以至于同时代最优秀的学者也无法辩驳他对儒家和墨家学说的颠覆性批评”[5]vi。瞿理思将庄子描绘成一个热烈追求独立和自由精神的人。他重复了这位中国哲学家拒绝接受楚国丞相官职时所说的话:“我宁愿‘曳尾于涂中’,自得其乐,也不愿给一个国家的统治者做奴隶。我绝不会就职。如此我将常葆自由,随心所欲。”[5]vi-vii老子和庄子都是悖论式语言大师,为此瞿理思举了一些例子来展示他所谓的“奇妙的无为学说”。例如,“无为而无不为”,“弱之胜强,柔之胜刚”,“天下之至柔,驰骋天下之至坚。无有入无间,吾是以知无为之有益”[5]viii-ix。巧得出奇的是,这些短小精悍的悖论式语录多么像王尔德式的警句表达——那些散落在《道林·格雷的肖像》的序言和文论集《意图》中的机智诙谐的语句。当王尔德读到瞿理思的译本并发现庄子与自己志趣相投时,肯定也意识到了这一点。当然,王尔德对中国道家思想并无太多了解,期望听到他对道家哲人庄子的内行评论是不现实的。不过,王尔德的评论中引人关注的是:他是如何解读庄子的?他在这位中国哲学家身上发现了什么共通之处?这种共鸣又如何影响了他的社会政治观点,影响了他关于个人自由、摒弃一切政府形式的信念?事实上,人们在阅读王尔德对庄子的评论和介绍时可能会感到迷惑,他到底是在援引庄子还是在表白自己?而这正提醒了我们关注《庄子》中著名的庄生梦蝶的故事,说庄子梦为蝴蝶,从梦中醒来时,便不能确定哪个世界是真的:所梦是真,还是真实是梦?他到底是一个梦见自己变成了蝴蝶的人,还是一只梦见自己变成了哲学家庄子的蝴蝶[6]53-54?王尔德的阐述方式完全吻合这种精神,所以我们在读他的评论时,有时会拿不准到底是庄子还是王尔德在说话。

王尔德发现庄子是一个反社会的哲学家,并宣称“一段时间以来,我读到的对现代生活最尖锐的批评,莫过于博学的庄子在他的著作中所谈到的”[7]177。英国中产阶级在瓷器或屏风上可能已经见过这位中国哲学家的肖像画,并且觉得这些肖像画很有趣。但王尔德说:“如果他们真的对他有所了解,就会为之颤抖。庄子倾其一生宣扬他的无为学说,指出所有有用事物的无用性。‘无为而无不为’,这是从他的伟大导师老子那里继承来的信条;将行动融于思想,思想融于抽象,就是他邪恶的超验目标。”[7]178王尔德将庄子与自柏拉图、斐洛至艾克哈特大师、雅各布·波麦和黑格尔的西方哲学家和神秘主义者进行了比较,声称“从赫拉克利特到黑格尔,庄子可以说几乎集欧洲形而上学或神秘主义思想的所有意趣于一身”。但庄子远比他的欧洲同行们激进得多,因为“庄子不仅仅是一个形而上学者或启蒙思想者,他致力于摧毁我们所知的社会,即中产阶级所知的社会;糟糕的是,他还结合了卢梭式的激情雄辩与赫伯特·斯宾塞式的科学推理”[7]178-179。将这位古老的中国哲学家进一步拉近现代社会,王尔德的庄子听起来就越来越像《谎言的衰朽》中的维维安或《作为艺术家的批评家》中的吉尔伯特,也就是说,王尔德的庄子就是王尔德本人观点的角色化或代言人,以典型的王尔德式的似非而是的讽刺警句风格说话。王尔德说,庄子并不是一个感伤主义者:

如果他的确曾怜悯过什么的话,那么他怜悯富人更甚于怜悯穷人。对他来说,发财致富和

受苦受难同样具有悲剧性。他丝毫没有现代人对失败者所怀的同情心，也不主张总是出于道德考虑给予那些落在最后的参赛者以奖励。他反对的是竞赛本身；虽然积极同情他人已成为我们时代众多高尚人士的操守，他却认为试图使别人变好是一种愚蠢的行当，“若击鼓而求亡子焉”，只是白白浪费精力，仅此而已。在庄子眼里，一个具有深切同情心的人不过是一味想要变成别的某个人，也就因此失去了自我存在的唯一可能的理由。[7]178

庄子理想中的黄金时代在王尔德看来是这样一个时代：“那时没有竞争性考试，没有乏味的教育系统，没有传教士，没有给穷人布施的小恩小惠，没有正统的教会，没有人道组织，没有关于一个人应对他的邻居承担什么道德义务的乏味演讲，没有关于任何主题的令人厌烦的说教。他告诉我们，在那个理想的时代，人们无知无仁，也从不给报纸写文章议论慈善问题，却能相亲相爱。”[7]179-180 这显然是王尔德借中国哲学家之口说自己的观点，但令人惊讶的是，它极其准确地抓住了道家哲学的一些核心观点，即反对儒家人为地干预事物发展的自然过程。在王尔德的描绘中，庄子是一名反社会干预、反政府、捍卫个人自由的斗士，而这的确是我们在庄子的原著与道家思想中可以见到的。王尔德笔下的庄子主张“宥天下”，因为“不闻治天下也”[7]180。在王尔德的评论中，庄子的哲学主要是对现代社会和现代政治体制的一种批判。“如果我们得出结论压根儿就没有管理人民这种事，那么政府和职业政客们的命运将如何？’王尔德接着说，“可见庄子是一个非常危险的作家，在他死后两千年用英语出版他的著作，时机显然还不成熟，会给许多可敬的、勤勉的人们带来重重的伤害”[7]186。这里可能有王尔德惯用的夸张，但并不意味着它是一句戏言，因为我们发现这些基本观点在他的政论文《社会主义下人的灵魂》中得到了进一步阐发。

作为维多利亚时期一位富有艺术敏感的唯美主义者，王尔德所理解的社会主义或许在我们看来根本就是错误的，是堂吉诃德式的奇想，但它与某种威廉・莫里斯式的英国社会主义幻想不无联系，即与其说它是一种社会主义理论，不如说是对个人主义与艺术自由的呼吁。结合他对庄子的评论来阅读《社会主义下人的灵魂》，这些观点的联系就非常显豁了。文章一开篇就写道：“建立社会主义的主要好处，无疑就是社会主义将使我们从可怜地为别人而活的必要性中解脱出来。在目前的情况下，这种必要性如此沉重地压迫着几乎每一个人，事实上，几乎无人可以幸免。”[8]1 这听起来神似王尔德所描绘的庄子理想中的黄金时代，那里“没有人道组织，没有关于一个人应对他的邻居承担什么道德义务的乏味演讲”；“没有关于聪明人的喋喋不休，也没有对高尚人士的歌功颂德。令人无法忍受的道德责任感更不知为何物”[7]180。社会主义是可贵的，因为“它通往个人主义”[8]2。它是人人自由的状态，即一切顺应自然，绝不强加给别人，即使是为了别人好。王尔德说，人的个性“将自然而简单地生长，就像花或树的生长”，“不会成天对别人指手画脚，或要求他们长得像自己一样。他会爱他们，因为他们各不相同。尽管不干涉他人，他却会帮助所有的人，正如一件美好的事物以其美的本来面目出现，就已经帮助了我们”[8]9。这让我们想起王尔德对庄子哲学的那些评论。而他在另一段里更直接地提到了庄子：“那么，个人主义是我们经由社会主义将会得到的。作为一个自然结果，国家必须放弃一切关于治理的概念。它必须放弃，因为正如一位比耶稣早诞生几个世纪的智者所说的，有放任人心这件事，却没有治理天下这件事①。所有形式的政府都是失败的。”[8]13 对王尔德来说，庄子是一位反对一切政府形式的激进的思想家，是现代无政府主义的先驱。事实上，正如索斯・艾尔提斯所辩称的那样，“王尔德的个人主义也呈现出与道家哲学许多相似之处，这种哲学本身提供了无政府主义思想最早的基础之一”。他接着谈到王尔德对庄子的评论，并说“这种思想与《社会主义下人的灵魂》的联系是显而易见的”[9]22-23。我们读庄子时会发现，庄子的机智诙谐、似非而是的语言的确暗示了它与王尔德的警句之间的文体亲和力，此外，庄子对现

① 即“闻在宥天下，不闻治天下也”——译者注。

代社会的颠覆式批评也令王尔德着迷且深受鼓舞。虽然王尔德并未谈到庄子哲学中许多别的观点和真知灼见,但他把阅读的重点放在自由和个人主义议题上,这本身就揭示了道家哲学值得批评界关注的一个非常重要的方面。

三

就在世界进入 20 世纪之时,王尔德逝世了,但他对庄子的兴趣预示了 20 世纪许多现代主义诗人一种相似的兴趣。威廉·卡洛斯·威廉斯和玛丽安·莫尔都有瞿理思的《庄子》译本,埃兹拉·庞德很可能也读过这译本。瞿理思的《中国文学史》当时很受现代主义者们欢迎,“他所讲述的庄生梦蝶的寓言”,正如钱兆明所说的,“足以像吸引庞德那样吸引威廉斯”,因为两人都仰慕“中国哲人拒绝对世间万物做任何区分”[10]146。庄子和他的前辈老子与中国的文字及中国文化一起,成为现代主义诗人们一个重要的灵感源泉,但诗人们阅读的侧重点各有不同,阐释也不尽相同。19 世纪 90 年代的王尔德在庄子身上找到的是对中产阶级价值观和现代政治体制的激烈批判,以及对个人自由的辩护;而庞德和威廉斯看到的是“中国哲人拒绝对世间万物做任何区分”的态度,这导致了对中文的一种理解方式,即将中文视为一种青睐意象和具体事物本身而摒弃逻辑联系和抽象概念的媒介,以及一种特别适合现代诗学的直接性和具体性的媒介。我们可能还会想起,几乎就在 20 世纪 20 年代的同一时期,在具有世纪末气息的维也纳,弗里茨·毛特纳也很欣赏老子和庄子,并“从‘道’中发现一种原始的语言批判(*in Tao eine uralte Sprachkritik zu entdecken*)”[11]468。对庄子、道家或中国语言文化的理解无时无刻不在变化,王尔德的理解也肯定不同于庞德、威廉斯或其他人。然而要点在于,当我们在其历史环境中审视这些各不相同的读法和诠释时,我们就可能意识到西方现代主义与东方之间在心智上的联系是严肃而深入的,并且意识到在理解现代主义文学时,王尔德作为这个领域的先驱之一仍然值得我们给予应有的承认和欣赏。

[参 考 文 献]

[1] O. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, New York: Modern Library, 1992.

[2] O. Wilde, "The Decay of Lying: An Observation," in *Intentions*, New York: Bretano's, 1905, pp. 1-56.

[3] Zhang Longxi, "The Critical Legacy of Oscar Wilde," in R. Gagnier (ed.), *Critical Essays on Oscar Wilde*, New York: G. K. Hall, 1991, pp. 157-171.

[4] O. Wilde, "The Critic as Artist," in *Intentions*, New York: Bretano's, 1905, pp. 93-217.

[5] Chuang Tzŭ, *Mystic, Moralist, and Social Reformer*, trans. by H. A. Giles, London: Bernard Quaritch, 1889.

[6] Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi Jishi*, in Chinese Classics Compiling Society (ed.), *Zhuzi Jicheng*: *Vol*. 3, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1954.

[7] O. Wilde, "A Chinese Sage," in *A Critic in Pall Mall*: *Being Extracts from Reviews and Miscellanies*, London: Methuen, 1919, pp. 177-186.

[8] O. Wilde, "The Soul of Man under Socialism," in I. Murray (ed.), *The Soul of Man and Prison Writings*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 198-206.

[9] S. Eltis, *Revising Wilde*: *Society and Subversion in the Plays of Oscar Wilde*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

[10] Z. Qian, *Orientalism and Modernism*: *The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.

[11] F. Mauthner, *Wörterbuch der Philosophie: Neue Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprach*, *Vol*. 2, Munich: Georg Müller, 1910. [F. Mauthner, *A Dictionary of Philosophy: New Contributions to a Critique of Language*, *Vol*. 2, Munich: Georg Müller, 1910.]

·浙江大学校史专栏·

马寅初与浙江大学

张淑锵　金灿灿

(浙江大学 档案馆，浙江 杭州 310028)

马寅初(1882—1982)是我国著名的教育家、经济学家。早年肄业于北洋大学，1914 年获哥伦比亚大学研究院经济学博士学位。1949—1951 年，马寅初担任新中国成立后浙江大学第一任校长。1955 年当选为中国科学院院士(学部委员)。马寅初是著名的学者，也是铁骨铮铮的民主人士，是浙江大学百年历史上又一位“求是”精神的典范。

马寅初与浙江大学的渊源最早可以追溯到 1927 年第三中山大学成立之际。1927 年 6 月，身兼第三中山大学筹备委员会委员的蔡元培、蒋梦麟等人为筹建第三中山大学多方聘请师资，马寅初就是一个重要人选。蒋梦麟曾致信胡适云：“孑丈(蔡元培)及同人等极愿来浙，担任经济一门……”(高叔平《蔡元培年谱长编》第三卷，人民教育出版社 1998 年版，第 58 页)同年 10 月 19 日，马寅初应邀到浙大演讲《中国之经济组织》(《国立浙江大学第一届毕业纪念刊》，浙江大学档案馆，档号编号：ZD-1900-ZL12-0002)。然而，由于种种原因，马寅初并没有受聘任教于浙大。1936 年，竺可桢出任浙江大学校长以后，浙江大学与马寅初仍然保持联系。就在这年 5 月，马寅初两次来校演讲。他所演讲的《中国金融问题》和《非常时期中国之财政问题》，对当时国民党政府中贪官污吏的假公济私和受贿舞弊等行为进行了深刻的揭露和有力的鞭挞。抗战时期，马寅初被蒋介石软禁在重庆歌乐山，竺可桢代表浙大师生到他的住处看望。抗战胜利后，马寅初受浙江大学学生自治会邀请，来校讲演《中国目前经济之危机》。竺可桢校长曾数度登门拜访，邀请马寅初来校任教。但是，由于执政当局的阻挠最终没有成功。

除了给浙大学生授课，马寅初还多次参与了由浙大等校学生组织的爱国民主运动。1946 年 6 月 5 日，国民党政府通过《暂时开放内河航行》的决议，向帝国主义出卖内河航行权，引起浙大学生的强烈反对。6 月 10 日，在杭州的浙大学生成立罢课委员会。11 日，浙江大学等 14 所学校学生代表在浙江大学举行会议，决定成立“杭州市大中专学生联合会”，浙大学生自治会主席吴士濂担任市学联主席(后为黄铁夫)。6 月 13 日，全市大中学校学生举行集会。马寅初不顾国民政府的禁令，出现在会场主席台上，令学生们大受鼓舞。马寅初开门见山地说：“今天，大家出来维持正气，来反对内战，机会非常难得。我虽没用，但绝对要跟着大家走。”(《文汇报》1946 年 6 月 16 日)会后，轰轰烈烈的“六·一三”反内战示威大游行举行了。浙大、杭高等十几所学校万余名学生冒着大雨参加了这次游行。年逾花甲的马寅初“一马当先”，站在队伍最前列，振臂高呼：“打倒官僚资本！”“反对打内战！”(徐斌《天地良知——马寅初传》，浙江人民出版社 2008 年版，第 136 页)如果说，1942 年 1 月“倒孔”运动中的竺可桢校长亲自走在游行队伍的最前列，保护了学生，那么马寅初的“一马当先”，同样有力地推动浙大等校学生的“反饥饿、反内战、反迫害”的爱国民主运动。

随着国民党大陆政权的逐步丢失，浙江大学终于迎来了一个全新但却短暂的马寅初时代。1949 年 8 月，浙江省人民政府委任马寅初为浙大校务委员会主任兼校长。当时的浙大教务长严仁赓回忆说：“六七月间，沿沪杭一线埋设大量地雷，一时未及起出，火车未通，马老是乘汽车来杭的……他不辞辛苦，也冒了生命危险。马老做事，往往不顾一切。”(严仁赓《我所了解的马寅初先生》，见《马寅初先生百岁寿辰庆贺会文集》第 24 页，浙江大学档案馆，档号编号：ZD-1900-ZL12-0343)8 月 26 日，马寅初在浙江省政府主席谭震林的陪同下至浙大就职。他说：“过去在国民党统治下，曾数次应竺可桢校长之召来浙大任教，但都被反动派特务所阻挠。做教授尚且如此之难，何况做校长？现在由于毛主席的英明领导及人民解放军的英勇斗争，打败了帝国主义，铲除了国民党的反动势力，所以我才能够被任为校长。”(马寅初《在浙江大学校长就职典礼上的演说》，见《马寅初全集》第 14 卷，浙江人民出版社 1999 年版，第 50 页)马寅初出任浙大校长以后，积极贯彻党的教育方针，阐明大学教育的目标和办学目的是在人民民主的总方针下学习新的思想，确定为人民服务的立场，与建设相结合，培养切合实际要求的专门人才。他采取了一系列举措，创新治校模式，推进教育目标和办学目的落到实处。其间，他还多次率领浙大学生徒步登上凤凰山，祭拜在爱国民主运动中牺牲的浙大学子于子三。

1951 年 6 月，马寅初调任北大校长。

第 42 卷第 3 期
2012 年 5 月

浙 江 大 学 学 报(人文社会科学版)
Journal of Zhejiang University(Humanities and Social Sciences)

Vol. 42, No. 3
May 2012

DOI: 10. 3785/j. issn. 1008-942X. 2012. 03. 281

Elective Affinities?
— On Wilde's Reading of Zhuangzi

Zhang Longxi
(*Department of Chinese, Translation and Linguistics, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China*)

At the beginning of his famous novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde describes Lord Henry Wotton as lying on some Persian saddle-bags in a divan and smoking his cigarettes, while the silhouette of some birds in flight, a veritable show of *ombres chinoises*, was unfolding itself in front of his eyes: "and now and then the fantastic shadows of birds in flight flitted across the long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, producing a kind of momentary Japanese effect, and making him think of those pallid jade-faced painters of Tokyo who, through the medium of an art that is necessarily immobile, seek to convey the sense of swiftness and motion"[1]1. Here Wilde is portraying what would be an exotic and fascinating Oriental effect in the Victorian English imagination, though at the same time he is perfectly aware that this effect owes more to the fantasy of exoticism than to the reality of an Oriental country. "The Japanese people are the deliberate self-conscious creation of certain individual artists," as Wilde puts it in his essay "The Decay of Lying" in an unsentimental, sober-minded vein. "The actual people who live in Japan are not unlike the general run of English people; that is to say, they are extremely commonplace, and have nothing curious or extraordinary about them. In fact the whole of Japan is a pure invention"[2]46-47. For Wilde, of course, art and imagination are far more important than the banality of life, and it is artistic creation that gives us beauty and meaning in life. He certainly prefers the artistic invention of Japan to the banal reality of Japan, but he knows the difference between imagination and reality.

Wilde articulates these important ideas in the critical essays collected in the volume entitled *Intentions*. As I have argued elsewhere, the "dialogues on art and criticism in *Intentions* have a coherent and symmetrical structure"[3]160. First, "The Decay of Lying" puts forward the bold creed of the new aesthetics of art for art's sake: that "Life imitates art far more than Art imitates life;" and that "Life holds the Mirror up to Art, and either reproduces some strange type imagined by painter or sculptor, or realizes in fact what has been dreamed in fiction"[2]32,39. Then "The Critic as Artist" establishes a similarly structured relationship between criticism and art as that between art

Received date: 2012-03-28　　**Website**: http://www.journals.zju.edu.cn/soc

Online first date: 2012-04-29

Author profile: Zhang Longxi is a leading scholar in East-West cross-cultural studies. He had taught at Harvard and the University of California, Riverside, and is currently Chair Professor of Comparative Literature and Translation at City University of Hong Kong. He is an elected foreign member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, a member of the Executive Council of the International Comparative Literature Association, and an Advisory Editor of *New Literary History*.

and life, arguing that if we understand life through art, then we understand art through criticism, for "the critic occupies the same relation to the work of art that he criticises as the artist does to the visible world of form and colour, or the unseen world of passion and of thought"[4]136-137. Wilde claims that "the highest Criticism, being the purest form of personal impression, is in its way more creative than creation;" and that it is "the only civilised form of autobiography"[4]138-139. In his concept of creative criticism, Wilde fully acknowledges the critic's subjectivity, the specific insight into the nature of life and art from the critic's own perspective and imaginative vision. Such an idea or, rather, a distorted form of it, may have gone to the extreme in more recent literary theory and criticism, in which the critic or theorist is very often more interested in any number of social or political issues than literature as such, but for Wilde, artistic creation is always the focus of critical attention, and his witty and delightful essays are so much greater a joy to read than the obscurantist and jargon-ridden academese that we find in some of the contemporary writings that masquerade as literary or cultural criticism.

It is against such a background that I now come to comment on Wilde's review of the Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi (or Chuang Tzŭ) as translated by the English Sinologist Herbert Giles and published in London in 1889. Though the book of Zhuangzi is not a literary work — but again, Zhuangzi's language is probably more literary and poetic than most poets and writers, and his ideas are expressed in far more subtle paradoxes and striking metaphors than most literary writings — Wilde's long review published in Speaker on February 8th, 1890, is certainly infused with the creative spirit as he argued for in "The Critic as Artist." If the mention of a "momentary Japanese effect" in *Dorian Gray* can be seen as a decorative motif that embellishes the opening of the novel with an Oriental flavor, Wilde's review entitled "A Chinese Sage" is a serious engagement with the philosophy of Zhuangzi, whom Giles presented as a "mystic, moralist, and social reformer." Wilde's review is an important piece that not only gives us a rare opportunity to catch a glimpse of his interest in the thought of an ancient philosopher from the East, but also provides an example of Wilde's criticism that reads Zhuangzi from the perspective of a Victorian critic and uses the Chinese philosopher's ideas to comment on the English society of his own time. Wilde's review is also important because it shows how much interest there was in Taoist philosophy and mysticism at the turn of the century in the late 1890s and the early 1900s. Because that review is not included in most modern editions of Wilde's works, it is not readily available and has not received the critical attention it deserves, and that is all the more reason for us to examine it as an important aspect of Wilde's oeuvre often neglected even by Wilde scholars.

In his introduction to the translation, Giles describes Zhuangzi as an enemy of the Confucian school and a follower of the mysteries of Lao Tzŭ, and as a great debater whose "literary and dialectic skill was such that the best scholars of the age proved unable to refute his destructive criticism of the Confucian and Mohist schools"[5]vi. Giles portrays Zhuangzi as a fiercely independent and free spirit, and he tells the story of the Chinese philosopher refusing to accept the position of Prime Minister of the State of Chu, saying: "I would rather disport myself to my own enjoyment in the mire than be slave to the ruler of a State. I will never take office. Thus I shall remain free to follow my own inclinations"[5]vi-vii. Both Laozi and Zhuangzi are great masters of paradoxical expressions, and Giles samples some of these that articulate what he calls "the wondrous doctrine of Inaction." For example, "Do nothing, and all things will be done;" "The

weak overcomes the strong, the soft overcomes the hard;" and "The softest things in the world override the hardest. That which has no substance enters where there is no fissure. And so I know that there is advantage in *Inaction*"[5]viii-ix. By a strange coincidence, these short and paradoxical sayings sound very much like the epigrammatic expressions we typically relate to Wilde's style, the kind of witty expressions we find in the preface to *Dorian Gray* or in the essays in Intentions. Wilde himself must have realized this when he read Giles's translation and found in Zhuangzi a kindred spirit. Of course, Wilde did not know much about Chinese philosophy or Taoism, and it would be unrealistic to expect from him much expert discussion of Zhuangzi as a Taoist philosopher. What is of interest in Wilde's review, however, is the way in which he read Zhuangzi and found in the Chinese philosopher a congenial style and a sympathetic mind that influenced his own social and political ideas, his conviction of personal freedom and the rejection of all forms of government. In fact, reading Wilde's review and his presentation of Zhuangzi, one may feel confused whether Wilde is quoting Zhuangzi or he is speaking for himself, but that reminds us of one of the most famous passages in the *Zhuangzi*, where the philosopher woke up from a dream in which he had become a butterfly, and he was not sure which was real: whether the dream was reality or the reality was a dream, whether he was a man dreaming of being a butterfly or he was a butterfly dreaming of being Zhuangzi the philosopher[6]53-54. The way Wilde speaks is in perfect keeping with that spirit, and when we read his review, sometimes we may feel uncertain whether Zhuangzi or Wilde is speaking.

Wilde finds Zhuangzi an anti-social philosopher, and he declares that "the most caustic criticism of modern life I have met with for some time is that contained in the writings of the learned Chuang Tzŭ"[7]177. The English middle class might have seen the portraits of the Chinese sage on porcelain or Chinese screens and found them amusing, but, says Wilde, "If they really knew who he was, they would tremble. Chuang Tzŭ spent his life in preaching the great creed of Inaction, and in pointing out the uselessness of all useful things. 'Do nothing, and everything will be done,' was the doctrine which he inherited from his great master Lao Tzŭ. To resolve action into thought, and thought into abstraction, was his wicked transcendental aim"[7]178. Wilde compares Zhuangzi to Western philosophers and mystics from Plato, Philo to Master Eckhart, Jacob Böhme, and Hegel, claiming that "Chuang Tzŭ may be said to have summed up in himself almost every mood of European metaphysical or mystical thought, from Heraclitus down to Hegel." But he was far more radical than his European counterparts, for "Chuang Tzŭ was something more than a metaphysician and an illuminist. He sought to destroy society, as we know it, as the middle classes know it; and the sad thing is that he combines with the passionate eloquence of a Rousseau the scientific reasoning of a Herbert Spencer"[7]178-179. Bringing the ancient Chinese philosopher closer to the modern world, Wilde's Zhuangzi sounds more and more like Vivian in "The Decay of Lying" or Gilbert in "The Critic as Artist," that is to say, personae or mouthpieces of Wilde's own ideas, speaking in typically Wildean paradoxical epigrams. Zhuangzi, says Wilde, is not a sentimentalist:

> He pities the rich more than the poor, if he ever pities at all, and prosperity seems to him as tragic as suffering. He has nothing of the modern sympathy with failures, nor does he propose that the prizes should always be given on moral grounds to those who come in last in the race. It is the race that he objects to; and as for active sympathy,

> which has become the profession of so many worthy people in our own day, he thinks that trying to make others good is as silly an occupation as 'beating a drum in a forest in order to find a fugitive.' It is a mere waste of energy. That is all. While, as for a thoroughly sympathetic man, he is, in the eyes of Chuang Tzŭ, simply a man who is always trying to be somebody else, and so misses the only possible excuse for his own existence.[7]178

Zhuangzi's ideal of a Golden Age, says Wilde, is a time "when there were no competitive examinations, no wearisome educational systems, no missionaries, no penny dinners for the people, no Established Churches, no Humanitarian Societies, no dull lectures about one's duty to one's neighbour, and no tedious sermons about any subject at all. In those ideal days, he tells us, people loved each other without being conscious of charity, or writing to the newspapers about it"[7]179-180. These are obviously Wilde's own ideas disguised as the Chinese philosopher's, but surprisingly they show a remarkably accurate grasp of the core ideas of the Taoist philosophy, its argument against the kind of human intervention, as represented by Confucian teachings, in the natural course of things. As Wilde represents him, Zhuangzi becomes an enemy of social intervention and government, and a champion for individual freedom, which we do find in the original Zhuangzi and in Taoism in general. Wilde's Zhuangzi argues for "leaving mankind alone," for "there has never been such a thing as governing mankind"[7]180. In Wilde's review, Zhuangzi's philosophy becomes mainly a critique of modern life and modern political institutions. "And what would be the fate of governments and professional politicians if we came to the conclusion that there is no such thing as governing mankind at all? Wilde continues to say. "It is clear that Chuang Tzŭ is a very dangerous writer, and the publication of his book in English, two thousand years after his death, is obviously premature, and may cause a great deal of pain to many thoroughly respectable and industrious persons"[7]186. That may be a hyperbole typical of Wilde, but that does not mean it is not sincere, for here we find some basic ideas Wilde develops further into his political essay *The Soul of Man under Socialism*.

As a man of artistic sensibility and a Victorian aesthete, Wilde's idea of socialism strikes us today as fundamentally mistaken and peculiarly quixotic, but it has its connections with the kind of English socialist fantasies of a William Morris, and it is more of a plea for individualism and artistic freedom than a socialist theory. Reading *The Soul of Man* together with his review of Zhuangzi, the connections of ideas are inescapable. The very beginning of the essay reads: "The chief advantage that would result from the establishment of Socialism is, undoubtedly, the fact that Socialism would relieve us from that sordid necessity of living for others which, in the present condition of things, presses so hardly upon almost everybody. In fact, scarcely anyone at all escapes"[8]1. That sounds very much like Zhuangzi's Golden Age when, as Wilde describes it, there were "no Humanitarian Societies, no dull lectures about one's duty to one's neighbour;" and "There was no chattering about clever men, and no laudation of good men. The intolerable sense of obligation was unknown"[7]180. Socialism is valuable because "it will lead to Individualism"[8]2. It will be the condition of free individuals who follow whatever comes naturally without imposing on others, including for the benefit of others. The personality of man, says Wilde, "will grow naturally and simply, flower-like, or as a tree grows," and "it will not be always meddling with others, or asking them to be like itself. It will love them because they will be different. And yet

while it will not meddle with others it will help all, as a beautiful thing helps us, by being what it is"[8]9. This reminds us of what Wilde says about Zhuangzi's philosophy in his review, and in another passage, he more directly refers to Zhuangzi the Chinese philosopher: "Individualism, then, is what through Socialism we are to attain. As a natural result the State must give up all idea of government. It must give it up because, as a wise man once said many centuries before Christ, there is such a thing as leaving mankind alone; there is no such thing as governing mankind. All modes of government are failures"[8]13. For Wilde, Zhuangzi is a radical thinker that negates all forms of government, a predecessor of modern anarchism. Indeed, as Sos Eltis argues, "Wilde's individualist doctrine also presented many parallels with Taoist philosophy, a philosophy which itself provided one of the earliest bases for anarchist thought." He goes on to mention Wilde's review of Zhuangzi and observes that "The relevance of this doctrine to 'The Soul of Man under Socialism' is clear"[9]22-23. If we read Zhuangzi, his witticism and paradoxical expressions indeed suggest some stylistic affinities with Wilde's epigrams in addition to the kind of retrogressive criticism of modern life that Wilde finds attractive and inspiring. Although there are many more ideas and insights in Zhuangzi's philosophy that Wilde did not touch on, the emphasis he put on freedom and individuality in his reading of Zhuangzi does reveal a very important aspect of the Taoist philosopher that deserves our critical attention.

Wilde died as the world moved into the twentieth century, but his interest in Zhuangzi anticipated a similar interest many modernist poets had well into the twentieth century. Both William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore owned copies of Giles' Zhuangzi translation, and Ezra Pound had most likely read it, too. Giles' History of Chinese Literature was popular at the time with the modernists, and "his version of Zhuangzi's parable about how he dreamed of being a butterfly," as Zhaoming Qian argues, "may well have appealed to Williams as it had appealed to Pound," as both admired "the Chinese sage's refusal to make distinctions among worldly things"[10]146. Zhuangzi and his predecessor Laozi, along with the Chinese written language and Chinese culture, proved to be a great inspiration for the modernist poets, but they were read differently with different focuses and interpretations. What Wilde found in Zhuangzi in the 1890s was a radical critique of middle-class values and modern political institutions, and an advocacy for individual freedom, but what Pound and Williams saw in "the Chinese sage's refusal to make distinctions" led to the understanding of the Chinese language as a medium that eschewed logical connections and abstract conceptualizations in favor of images and concrete *things* themselves, thus a medium specifically suited to the modernist poetics of immediacy and concreteness. We may also be reminded that roughly at the same time in the 1920s, in the fin-de-siècle Vienna, Fritz Mauthner appreciated Laozi and Zhuangzi and "discovered in Tao a primeval critique of language (*in Tao eine uralte Sprachkritik zu entdecken*)"[11]468. Understanding of Zhuangzi or Taoism or the Chinese language and culture changes all the time, and Wilde is certainly different from Pound, Williams, and others. The point is, however, that when we put the different readings and interpretations in perspective, we may realize that the intellectual connections of Western modernism with the East are serious and deep, and that Oscar Wilde is one of the predecessors in this respect that still needs to be recognized and appreciated in our understanding of modernist literature.

Bibliography

[1] O. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, New York: Modern Library, 1992.

[2] O. Wilde, "The Decay of Lying: An Observation," in *Intentions*, New York: Bretano's, 1905, pp. 1-56.

[3] Zhang Longxi, "The Critical Legacy of Oscar Wilde," in R. Gagnier (ed.), *Critical Essays on Oscar Wilde*, New York: G. K. Hall, 1991, pp. 157-171.

[4] O. Wilde, "The Critic as Artist," in *Intentions*, New York: Bretano's, 1905, pp. 93-217.

[5] Chuang Tzŭ, *Mystic, Moralist, and Social Reformer*, trans. by H. A. Giles, London: Bernard Quaritch, 1889.

[6] Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi Jishi*, in Chinese Classics Compiling Society (ed.), *Zhuzi Jicheng*: *Vol*. 3, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1954.

[7] O. Wilde, "A Chinese Sage," in *A Critic in Pall Mall*: *Being Extracts from Reviews and Miscellanies*, London: Methuen, 1919, pp. 177-186.

[8] O. Wilde, "The Soul of Man under Socialism," in I. Murray (ed.), *The Soul of Man and Prison Writings*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 198-206.

[9] S. Eltis, *Revising Wilde*: *Society and Subversion in the Plays of Oscar Wilde*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

[10] Z. Qian, *Orientalism and Modernism*: *The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.

[11] F. Mauthner, *Wörterbuch der Philosophie*: *Neue Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprach*, *Vol*. 2, Munich: Georg Müller, 1910. [F. Mauthner, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*: *New Contributions to a Critique of Language*, *Vol*. 2, Munich: Georg Müller, 1910.]